

~ALARIC~

"I can't believe your brother did something so bloody risky, and now he expects everyone to save him," Nicole complains next to me in the front seat.

"Nicole," I growl. "I've tolerated a lot of your criticism and complaints in the past, but I can tell you that tonight is not the night to test my patience."

My brother was in f*cking danger, and still, she had nothing good to say about him.

I was getting tired of this.

But Carter's decision to leave without the rest of us wasn't the only reason I felt uneasy.

It's the fact that he took Clara along with him.

Why would he do such a thing? He knew that he was already putting his life in danger; why would he put her life in danger, also? Hasn't she been through enough already?

"What's wrong with you?" She demands. "I'm only trying to help."

"To help?" I demand. "You haven't said a single good thing since we entered this damn truck. I'm tired of the complaining, Nicole. A marriage isn't supposed to be this way. I've been trying hard to make things work, but you keep making it difficult for me."

"What are you trying to say?" She demands. "You've changed Alaric. Ever since that Clara girl entered your life, you've acted differently."

I sigh, not this again.

"Nicole, for the hundredth time. Clara is Carter's ex-girlfriend. She's not someone that I'm interested in, at least not in that way." I repeat. "Will you please give that a rest?"

She rolls her eyes and looks out the window, "I'm tired of our fights as well, you know. It's not only you, Alaric."

"Then why do you keep making things difficult for me?" I demand from her. "If we made it work in the past, this marriage can work again. We've done it before; we can do it again."

I didn't want to have this conversation now. My brother's life was in danger, and so was the life of Scarlett and Clara.

I shouldn't have to be doing this now. At least I didn't let the conversation stop me from mashing down on the accelerator. The truck was going as fast as it possibly could.

"I don't think you should come with me," I tell her.

"What?" She demands.

"You'll be a distraction, and I do not want to be distracted. I have to protect my brother." I inform her.

"A distraction?" She demands.

"Yes, I don't want to worry about your safety, too, Nicole," I tell her. "Please make this easier for me."

"We both know that you care about your bloody brother more than me!" She snaps. "It would be better if the Cage brothers get their way, and I wouldn't have to worry about him coming between us anymore."

I mash down hard on the brakes, and she gasps in surprise.

"What the hell did you do that for?" She demands in shock.

"Get out," I growl.

She turns to look at me; her mouth is wide open. I don't think I've ever spoken to her in this tone before.

"What did you just say to me?" She whispers.

"I said to get out of my truck," I repeat for her benefit.

"Alaric?" She says my name in disbelief. "What the hell is wrong with you? How can you drop me out in the middle of nowhere?"

"Don't act like you don't know Nicole," I growl. "My brother's life is in danger, and yet you wished him nothing but the worst. I can't be in the same vehicle with you right now."

"I can't believe you." She gasps. "You'll throw me out over something like this? How can you hurt me like this, Alaric?"

I angrily opened my door and walked over to her side. I pulled open her door and forced her out of the seat.

"Alaric, stop!" She shouts.

"You can end a drop with someone else," I inform her as I slam the door shut.

I didn't wait to hear what else she had to say to me as I rushed back into the truck.

It f*ck hurt to do that to her.

Ares flashes his lights behind me and pulls over to the side of me. I stopped the truck and lowered the window.

"What the hell is going on?" He asks me. "I just saw Nicole on the side of the road. What's she doing there?"

"I put her there," I inform him. "She said some things, and I thought it was better that she didn't join us today."

He looks shocked to my core at my words. Of course, he would be; I've never treated Nicole like that.

However, I wouldn't let her get her way with such horrible words as easily as I did in the past.

"How long again?" He asks me.

"We're at least fifteen minutes away," I inform him.

He nods, "Let's go save them!"